Offering Ray Data To FBI

By WILLIAM C. LHOTKA
Jefferson City Correspondent
of the Post-Dispatch

JEFFERSON CITY, April 13.—George M. Camp, deputy director of the State Department of Social Services, said yesterday that he would offer to turn over Missouri prison records to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and ask the FBI to determine whether there had been a conspiracy in the 1967 escape from the penitentiary of James Earl Ray.

In addition, Camp said he would ask for an Attorney General's opinion on whether those records pertaining to Ray's escape can be made public. Ray was convicted of the 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis, Tenn., and is serving a life sentence in the Tennessee State Prison.

Camp's statements were made at a meeting yesterday with representatives of the Kansas City chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

At its national convention, which begins in Atlanta today, the conference is expected to discuss the possibility of a conspiracy in the Rev. Dr. King's death.

The Rev. Emanuel Cleaver and the Rev. Jesse Douglas of the group's Kansas City chapter have pressed for reopening an investigation in Missouri to determine if Ray's six years in the state Penitentiary and subsequent escape — purportedly in the back of a bread truck — are linked to the King assassination.

The chapter's inquiry was prompted by a Time magazine article that excerpted parts of a yet-to-be-published book by George McMillan. The book and the magazine article alleged that Ray financed his pursuit of the Rev. Dr. King by selling drugs while an inmate at the state prison.

"It is highly unlikely, highly improbable that Ray participated in those activities here," said Camp of his review of Ray's files.

The Rev. Mr. Cleaver noted that McMillan had alleged that several guards were involved in the drug traffic, and that they were unlikely to write unbiased reports. Moreover, he said that two persons who were inmates at the same time as Ray were quoted by McMillan as disputing the contention that Ray was a loner and a model prisoner.

One of those inmates is currently serving a life sentence in the Georgia State Prison. The whereabouts of the other is unknown.

Camp said that interviews he conducted with inmates at the Missouri Penitentiary who served along with Ray, and with prison personnel produced nothing that would show evidence of a conspiracy.